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NASSER AND THE FUTURE OF ARAB NATIONALISM

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NASSER AND THE FUTURE OF ARAB NATIONALISM

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the outlook for Arab nationalism generally and to assess the problems and prospects of Nasser and the UAR in particular.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Militant nationalism will continue to be the most dynamic force in Arab political affairs, and Nasser is very likely to remain its foremost leader and symbol for the foreseeable future. The long-term outlook for the conservative and Western-aligned regimes is bleak. Despite important differences between competing brands of Arab nationalism, the significant ones all reflect desires for independence and neutralism, social and economic reform, and varying degrees of Arab unity. (*Paras. 10-11, 13, 29*)

2. We do not believe that the appeal of Arab unity, strong as it is to most Arab nationalists, will overcome the host of divisive and particularist interests which work against the creation of a union of Arab states. Nasser probably now appreciates the practical obstacles involved in seeking to establish such a union. He is likely to settle for more limited means of trying to assert paramountcy. (*Paras. 28, 30, 36-38*)

3. The UAR will make strong efforts to achieve progress in economic development, but neither the Egyptian nor

Syrian region is likely to attain significant economic growth without substantial and continued foreign aid. (*Paras. 15, 20-35*)

4. Nasser will probably continue to work for consolidation of unity between the Egyptian and Syrian regions through a fairly pragmatic combination of authoritarian control and tactical concessions to Syrian sensibilities. In most respects, such consolidation involves a high degree of Egyptian domination of Syria. We believe that Nasser has a good chance of avoiding a breakup of the union. However, striking successes are unlikely, and serious setbacks remain constantly possible. (*Paras. 14-24*)

5. Nasser's control of the UAR—as well as his position in the Arab world generally—will be helped by Arab fear and hatred of Israel. Israel's nuclear potential and Israeli plans to divert Jordan waters will intensify Arab apprehensions. The UAR has the only Arab armed forces with any significant potential against Israel, which gives Nasser a unique claim to Arab leadership. (*Paras. 19, 37-38*)

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6. This claim is further buttressed by Nasser's accepted position as the leading exponent of Arab reformism, and by his demonstrated readiness to assume leadership in defending Arab nationalism against communism. Despite his dependence on the Bloc, he is not neutral in the conflict between Arab nationalism and communism. (*Paras. 10-11, 19, 46-50*)

7. It is highly unlikely that Nasser will abandon his broad foreign policy of "positive neutralism." He has a basic belief that either of the great power blocs, if given free rein, would move to dominate or destroy him; he believes that neither can get free rein because of the determination of the other to prevent it. He will thus seek to avoid both total dependence on, and total alienation from, the Bloc as well as the West. Although in practice this strategy leads him to side more often with the Bloc than with the West, he has shown himself ready to respond vigorously to Soviet attacks. (*Paras. 48-51*)

8. It is probable that with the passage of time the inherent incompatibility between ultimate Soviet ambitions in the Middle East and the aspirations of Nasser and the Arab nationalists to preserve and strengthen their independent position will become increasingly manifest. If the Soviets should decide to abandon support of the Nasser regime in favor of increasingly heavy-handed pressure and subversion, the result would probably be a fundamental breach between Nasser and the USSR. However, such a breach may not come for years. (*Para. 52*)

9. Nasser's efforts to play a leading role among neutralists and Afro-Asians confront him with complex problems. Almost all African leaders, for example, are unwilling to see him play a dominant role on that continent. Moreover, matters like the forthcoming conference of nonaligned states and the future structure of the UN involve him in conflicting pressures from the Sino-Soviet Bloc and the neutralists. (*Paras. 41-42, 45, 53*)

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DISCUSSION

A. The Nature and Present State of Arab Nationalism

10. Militant nationalism remains the most dynamic force in Arab political affairs. There are of course different and competing types of Arab nationalism, which spring from important regional and religious distinctions as well as individual and governmental interests. However, all significant brands of Arab nationalism have important qualities in common. They rely on the modern secular state as the instrument for achieving their objectives, and place decreasing emphasis on traditional Islam as a basis of nationalism. The main manifestations of Arab nationalism are strongest among the emerging urban middle classes. These manifestations reflect desires for Arab independence and dignity, fundamental social and economic reform, and some degree of Arab unity. They provide expression for longstanding and widespread grievances in Arab society—feelings of inferiority to the great powers, extreme social and economic inequalities, hostility to the old elites, fear and hatred of Israel, and frustration over the obvious disharmony between traditional ways and the modern world.

11. In most of the Middle East, as indeed for most of the rest of the world, Nasser remains the prime leader and symbol of Arab nationalism. No other leader has so consistently and forcefully expressed its essential sentiments, and no other leader has enjoyed such concrete successes in its name. There is no Arab leader now on the scene nor, so far as we can tell, waiting in the wings, capable of matching Nasser's appeal or achieving a comparable basis of power and authority. King Saud and King Hussein are widely regarded as survivals of an outmoded past. Bourguiba commands but limited attention in the Arab states outside North Africa. And Qassim has failed to capture popular imagination outside Iraq or indeed very much within his country.

12. Nasser's own prestige and influence in the Arab world generally have been subject to fluctuations. In the last two or three years he has met with certain checks and reverses. The revolutionary regime in Iraq failed to join the Nasser camp, and in fact has frustrated more than one UAR effort to bring Iraq in by force of subversion and threat. The shining spirit of Arab unity which characterized the UAR's formation in early 1958 has been tarnished by exposure to the daily strains of actually implementing unification between Egypt and Syria. King Hussein has so far kept his throne despite strong blasts of vituperation from Nasser, and for several years there has been no dramatic success against Israel or the Western Powers to match the heady triumphs of the initial Soviet arms deal and the outcome of the Suez crisis.

13. Whether Nasser himself gains or loses strength in the coming years, the political, social, and psychological conditions and needs which have given rise to Arab nationalism will persist. It is unlikely, however, that any new leader could in the foreseeable future achieve the stature which a combination of political adroitness and substantial achievements have given Nasser.

B. The UAR

14. In the first instance, Nasser's future fortunes will depend heavily on developments in the UAR. The union of Syria and Egypt was a signal triumph for the Pan-Arab movement and a strong testimonial to Nasser's own appeal. It is also proving a critical test of his ability to sustain his appeal and to translate slogans and aspirations into realities. So far, he has met the test somewhat more successfully than most observers considered likely at the outset. Nonetheless, Syria presents to Nasser a situation in which spectacular gains are no longer open to him, but in which he is still vulnerable to major losses and damaging setbacks. In Egypt, we anticipate no significant challenges to Nasser's authority. The

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Egyptian military, the principal instrument of power in the UAR, have achieved elite status under Nasser, and will almost certainly continue to give him their support.

15. In general, Nasser has gone farthest and has met with the least trouble in consolidating centralized control in the field of UAR foreign policy. He has proceeded most slowly and has encountered the most resistance in the area of economic integration. Progress toward fully unifying the political and military structures of the two regions has been uneven. Nasser's unitary government does in fact exercise the real authority, and is buttressed in theory by a monolithic political organization, the National Union, which was organized in Egypt and then extended to Syria to replace the several Syrian political parties which are now officially disbanded.

16. In fact, however, the Syrian politicians of both left and right remain active, factionalism continues strong, and Nasser has been compelled to exercise his authority through an opportunistic system of playing factions off against each other—meanwhile relying on authoritarian controls exerted through his Syrian strong man, Sarraj, and the Egyptian Marshal Amer, UAR Commander in Chief. Unification of the military has in practice been implemented by establishing overall Egyptian control and by placing Egyptian officers in key positions in most Syrian units down to the company level. The inevitable result has been considerable resentment among Syrian officers. Restrictions on the press and economic control measures have antagonized important elements of the civilian population as well.

17. If anti-Egyptian sentiment among the Syrian military should ever be effectively joined with the discontent over the union prevalent among many Syrian civilians, Nasser's control of the UAR—indeed its very existence—would face a critical test. So far, Nasser has been successful in forestalling any coalescence of active and potential dissidents. He has been helped by the fact that civilian opposition is seriously weakened by factionalism and disparate ideologies. The old-line leaders of the Populist and Nationalist parties

have trouble getting together themselves, let alone cooperating with socialist groups like the Baath. The sharpening conflict between nationalism and communism has made nationalist cooperation with the Communists difficult. And unless one or more of the civilian factions can acquire significant army support, they will have only limited practical effectiveness in the face of Nasser's prestige among the masses and his authoritarian controls over the instruments of government.

18. One contingency which would quickly create a crisis for Nasser in Syria would be a falling out with Sarraj and his supporters. Aided by Nasser's support, Sarraj has developed over the years an efficient network of followers in the Syrian military and security services, and more recently in the civilian ministries, which makes him the most powerful Syrian on the scene. At least at present his role is central to Nasser's continued control in Syria, a fact no doubt appreciated fully in Cairo, and one which gives Sarraj considerable leverage in the central government. There is no reliable basis for estimating the durability of the Nasser-Sarraj collaboration. So far, it has proven mutually beneficial, especially since Sarraj himself is unpopular in Syria.

19. We consider that a total disruption of the UAR is highly unlikely. Nonetheless, the initial urge toward close unity on the part of many Arab nationalists will give way to desires for a looser association, and Nasser himself may make some concessions to these desires rather than try to keep control exclusively by force. Moreover, threats such as communism, "imperialism," and Israel will continue to serve as unifying factors and Nasser is fully alive to their value as such. To the extent that progress is made toward integration of the institutions of the two regions, the union will benefit from familiarity and usage. The charismatic personality of Nasser himself is a prime factor in holding the union together, and if he should disappear from the scene the continuation of the union, at least in its present form, would be open to question. Nasser would probably be succeeded by one of his longstanding military col-

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leagues, who would continue his essential policies. But without Nasser, the difficulties of holding Syria would be greatly increased.

20. The attainment of effective economic integration between the two regions of the UAR will remain a stubborn problem. Difficulties arise from incompatibilities between Syria's traditionally laissez-faire, comparatively prosperous economy and that of Egypt—which has long had a high degree of centralized control and which is hampered by scanty resources.

21. So far, the UAR Government has pursued a cautious approach toward economic unification. Nonetheless, some steps toward unification have been taken, such as imposition of Egyptian type foreign exchange controls in Syria and increasing Egyptian control of Syrian economic development plans. To achieve real integration, much more drastic measures would be required, notably the introduction of a common currency, the establishment of a single central bank, and integration of the customs systems. Such steps however are virtually certain to encounter Syrian resistance in one degree or another, and the central government may decide to go slowly lest this resistance aggravate existing economic and political problems.

22. Whatever its success with respect to economic integration, the UAR is earnestly committed to a program of economic development in both regions. During the current Five-Year Plan (1961–1965), UAR officials plan to invest nearly \$5 billion in the Egyptian region and almost \$800 million in Syria. The planned investment figure for Egypt includes about \$650 million toward completion of the Aswan High Dam. The development plan for Egypt stresses industrial projects, while the plans for Syria primarily emphasize agricultural projects. The foreign exchange component required for these overall plans amounts to about \$2.2 billion, of which \$570 million, has been pledged by the Bloc. In addition, about \$125 million in West German credits is available, as well as smaller sums from other free world countries. Thus, more than half the total foreign exchange required remains to be found.

23. In addition to the difficulties of securing foreign exchange, the UAR will have to cope with formidable problems including those of securing adequate domestic financing, the probability of inflation, and inadequate national resources and human skills. If the UAR secures the required foreign aid and continues to make reasonable use of its limited domestic resources, it can probably achieve small but steady rises in living standards, despite the rapid increase in population—about 2.5 percent annually. Nevertheless, even upon completion of their present plans, it is probable that neither region would be able to sustain significant economic growth without continued and substantial external aid.

24. Certain important generalizations can be made about the future patterns of economic development in the UAR. For one thing, the regime will make a major effort to bring it about—even though success will be far from certain. For another, the government will continue to place its principal reliance on state-initiated and state-supported schemes. There is little prospect that private investment will be allowed or encouraged to share to more than a limited degree in the effort. Private domestic or foreign investment is identified, in the minds of the UAR leaders, with the kind of foreign domination and indigenous class exploitation which they seek to eradicate. There is, indeed, likely to be a growing trend toward nationalization and state control of already existing private enterprises in Syria—a trend which is already far advanced in Egypt.

25. Nasser is fully aware of the need for foreign aid if he is to have any chance of carrying out this program. Special importance attaches to Soviet economic assistance because of its long-term character. Yet, even if the West were willing to supply the aid Nasser gets from the Soviets, Nasser would be constrained to seek aid from both sides in order to avoid exclusive dependence on either one. Nasser therefore will seek to avoid any disruption of relations that threatens to shut off his assistance from either side. Although a complete cutting-off of aid by the Soviets is

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not likely, deliberate Soviet foot-dragging as a means of pressure is a source of worry to Nasser.

26. In the important sphere of military assistance, Nasser is critically dependent on the Bloc, and he would regard the loss of such aid as catastrophic. He can have little hope that the West would replace it if the Bloc cut it off. Moreover, no Western guarantee of UAR security would serve Nasser's purpose of achieving superiority over Israel. In addition, the armed forces are the keystone of Nasser's regime in the UAR and of his prestige vis-a-vis his Arab neighbors.

27. Whatever Nasser's differences with the West, he is not likely to engage in interference with Suez Canal shipping, except in the case of Israel. Barring a crisis like the Suez war of 1956, Nasser will continue to run the canal efficiently. He will, however, almost certainly persist in denying transit to Israeli vessels, though in certain circumstances he might go along with some form of discreet accommodation for Israeli cargoes in other flag vessels. It would, however, be extremely difficult to find any such arrangement acceptable to both Nasser and Israel.

C. Nasser and the Rest of the Arab World

28. Arab unity remains a major theme of Nasser's nationalism, but his chances of translating the ideal into the kind of political reality represented by a single state are not bright. He probably realizes this. Certainly the concept of Arab political union under his aegis appears farther from realization today than it did, for example, in 1958 when the formation of the UAR, the Iraqi nationalist revolution, the pro-Nasser insurrection in Lebanon, and King Hussein's request for British intervention in Jordan all combined to dramatize the strength of Nasser's appeal and the degree to which his opponents were on the defensive.

29. We believe that the basic trends which brought on the events of 1958 will shape the future of the Arab world. Sooner or later, such conservative governments as those in Jordan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula are likely to be re-

placed by regimes which, if not directly inspired or actively backed by Nasser, will at least pursue domestic and foreign policies broadly comparable to his. Briefly stated, this means neutralism in world affairs and efforts, or at least gestures, toward domestic modernization and reform through centralized and authoritarian means.

30. But it is highly unlikely that the Arab states will one by one be absorbed by the UAR. Arab particularism remains a strong obstacle to unity as a result of rivalry for leadership of the movement, fear by certain elements that they will be dominated by others, and economic self-interests. Any regime in Saudi Arabia or Libya, for example, would be reluctant to share oil revenues with the UAR simply to prove its dedication to the cause of Arab unity. And while Nasser is of course capable of supporting and influencing revolutionary movements in these states, it is quite another thing for him to consolidate control over a revolutionary regime once it has gained power. Arab nationalism in other countries, even if inspired by Nasser, will not necessarily lead to submission to centralized UAR control. Indeed, it may provide new challenges to him. Nasser's experience with Iraq demonstrated this.

31. Iraqi nationalism has a strength and character of its own, derived not only from the historic rivalry between Cairo and Baghdad and Iraq's unwillingness to share its oil wealth, but also from the reluctance of Iraq's influential Shia and Kurdish minorities to submit to Sunni Arab domination under Nasser. The nationalists of Iraq will continue to pay their respects to Arab unity, and a minority probably hopes for actual merger with the UAR, but separatist tendencies are likely to prove stronger for years to come. Probably the strongest stimulus for a resurgence of pro-Nasser Pan-Arab sentiment in Iraq would be a renewed threat of a Communist takeover.

32. The Iraqis have for years periodically asserted a legal claim to Kuwait, based on questionable interpretations of long-dead Ottoman rights over Kuwait. Qassim's most recent assertion of this claim was probably

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motivated by fear that, as Kuwait gains full recognition of its independence following the recent termination of its special treaty with the UK, Iraq's claim would be given even shorter shrift in Arab League circles than it has hitherto. Iraq's claims are opposed by the Kuwaiti regime and by most other elements in Kuwait. They will also be resisted by most other Arab states, probably led by Saudi Arabia and the UAR. In addition, the UK retains the obligation to defend Kuwait against aggression if the Ruler requests it. We believe that any serious Iraqi attempt to take over Kuwait would fail. Nasser and the Saudis would mobilize the Arab League against it, and probably succeed in isolating Iraq politically. The UK would almost certainly take the necessary steps, including use of force if required, to forestall or defeat any such Iraqi effort.

33. The poverty-stricken and highly artificial state of Jordan, dependent for its existence on Western support, contains a large element which favors some form of association with the UAR. Even so, there would be strong obstacles to any merger even if King Hussein were removed. These include the risk that Israel would take military action to forestall a Nasser-controlled government in Jordan, the fact that some influential elements in Jordan—including most of the army—would oppose a merger, and Nasser's own probable reluctance to take on the unrewarding and risky burden of responsibility for this unviable state.

34. Yemen has been associated with the UAR through the United Arab States, an almost meaningless association. Having made the gesture, the Imam has successfully blocked any significant growth in Nasser's influence in this primitive state. When the Imam leaves the scene, the prospects for a growth in Egyptian influence will increase, especially if Crown Prince Badr—who is supported by the Egyptians—succeeds his father.

35. Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria have traditionally had a separate status in the Arab world and are much less susceptible to Nasser's influence and to the pull of Pan-

Arabism than the eastern Arab states. The same may be said to a lesser degree of Libya and the Sudan, both of which have reason to fear Egyptian subversion. While Nasser will remain a model for radicals and a possible source of support for dissidents in all of these areas, it is not likely that he will be able to influence events decisively in former French North Africa during the next few years. Indeed, his influence there might decline should the Algerian problem be settled.

36. It is probable that Nasser himself is reconciled to the prospect that Arab unity will take more time to achieve and will assume a less organized form than he once hoped. The experience of governing Syria has almost certainly impressed him with the practical difficulties of consolidating and exerting formal control over areas beyond Egypt, as has his failure to bring Iraq into line. He almost certainly believes that Arab unity will eventually come and that the "logic of history" and the passage of time will bring it. He will remain ready to facilitate the process by his efforts to make a success of the UAR and by encouragement and support of sympathetic elements in other states. He will be quick to defend against all comers his role as chief spokesman and symbol of the movement.

37. Nasser's efforts to preserve and enhance this position are likely to be along several, reasonably predictable lines. His voice will continue to be the strongest one in Arab League councils. Indeed, it is primarily through a strengthened Arab League that Nasser and his colleagues probably now hope to assert paramountcy in Arab affairs. Fear of and hostility toward Israel are still the strongest cohesive elements in the Arab League. In such circumstances, Nasser's control of the UAR armed forces—the only Arab force with any potential against Israel—supports his role as the prime champion of Arab interests. No Arab leader outside the UAR has any prospect of enjoying this advantage.

38. The UAR is currently striving through the Arab League to create a unified Arab military command, which it would naturally dominate. Most other Arab states have

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agreed in principle to this command, since for them it is a gesture with little practical meaning. Jordan will continue to resist it, lest it give the UAR control of Jordanian forces. Similarly, Nasser's concept of forming a distinct entity representing all Palestinians has received general agreement except from the government of Jordan, where most of them live. Nasser may indeed come to a falling out with Qassim over tactics on the Palestine issue, but it is unlikely to mean more than a suspension of Iraq's participation in League activities. All in all, Nasser will continue to use the Arab League as a ready-made instrument to influence the rest of the Arab world.

39. Potent as the Israeli issue is in drawing the Arabs together and underlining the importance of Nasser and the UAR, it confronts him with increasingly critical problems. His belief that Israel may develop a nuclear weapons capability raises for him the specter of clear and decisive Israeli military superiority over the Arabs for the indefinite future. If the Israelis go ahead with present plans to divert Jordan waters in the next two years or so, there will be the strongest pressures on Nasser to lead the Arabs in preventive action. Yet it remains likely that Israel would defeat the Arabs in any new round of hostilities, and Nasser probably appreciates this.

40. Though we cannot rule out the possibility that Nasser might initiate hostilities out of desperation or overoptimism concerning UAR capabilities, we think it more likely that he will fall back on political moves to forestall such dangers from Israel. In addition to making the most of a united Arab front on these questions, he will continue efforts to marshal Afro-Asian and neutralist sentiment against Israel, to keep the issues alive in the UN, and to elicit assurances of support and protection from both the USSR and the US. He has an ingrained suspicion of Zionist influence over the US, and at the same time, quite likely exaggerates the extent to which Israel is responsive to US influence. However, he will continue to press the US for support in curbing Israeli threats to the UAR.

D. Nasser and the Afro-Asian World

41. Beginning with his successful appearance at the Bandung Conference in 1955, Nasser has devoted much effort to establishing a position as a leader among the Afro-Asian states generally, making particular use of his doctrine of "positive neutralism" to appeal to the nonaligned or uncommitted states. His most recent foray into this arena, the conference of nonaligned states scheduled for September 1961 and sponsored primarily by the UAR and Yugoslavia, underlines his achievement of a leading role in this respect. His chances of sustaining and developing his influence along these lines are greatest among certain of the new states of Africa, where a degree of religious affinity with African Moslems, Nasser's own record of militant resistance to the Western colonial powers, and his successful practice of the neutralist strategy all give him advantages.

42. Nevertheless, we do not believe that he will prove a decisive or dominating influence on the African scene. Nasser has neither the political nor the material leverage with the African states to enable him to play this role. He will encounter some competition from Israel in certain African states. More importantly, he will find that almost all of the African leaders—in the new states as well as the older ones—are unwilling to see him play a dominant role in Africa. Moreover, he will find himself involved in rivalries among competing African groups.

43. Nasser himself is not unaware of these limitations, and of the difficulties of controlling events in a volatile situation like the Congo. For this reason, he is likely to avoid the kind of total commitment which would jeopardize UAR prestige if the side he favors should lose. Nevertheless, Nasser will maintain an active interest in identifying himself with nationalist and anticolonialist movements. More specifically, in cases where there is a conflict or choice between moderate and extremist nationalist leaders (e.g., between a Kasavubu and a Gizenga) Nasser will be instinctively inclined to side with the extremist.

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As a result of his still-lively suspicions that the Western Powers remain bent on halting or reversing the trend of events in Africa, he has a strong tendency to judge the credentials of African leaders by the degree of hostility they show toward the Western Powers.

44. Nasser's African policies will inevitably involve him in continuing clashes with the interests and policies of the Western Powers. There will thus almost certainly continue to be a considerable parallelism between Soviet and UAR policies in Africa. As in the Arab world, however, when and if Nasser comes to believe that Soviet support for a given African regime clearly threatens to develop into Soviet domination, he would oppose it. In both areas, the more obvious and imminent the Soviet bid for power appears to Nasser the more likely it is to bring forth his opposition. The uncertain factor lies in what it takes to convince Nasser of the existence of an urgent Soviet threat in any given situation.

45. Nasser's efforts to play a leading role in neutralist and Afro-Asian circles involve him in some competition and conflict with other neutralist powers. Nehru, for example, has disapproved of several Nasser moves in recent months—including UAR opposition to the UN in the Congo operation, and the efforts to develop a strong neutralist or "third force" bloc implicit in Nasser's sponsorship of the projected conference of nonaligned states. The latter project has for different reasons also incurred Sino-Soviet displeasure—particularly since Tito is cosponsor.

E. Nasser, Arab Nationalism, and the Great Powers

46. Nothing has contributed more to Nasser's stature among the Arabs than his militant assertion of independence against external forces believed by the Arabs to be hostile. Arab feeling is rooted deeply in resentment over decades of Western domination of the Arab world. It was intensified by the humiliating Arab defeat at Israel's hands in 1948. It is the stronger because it provides an excuse—the wickedness of the great powers—for a host of deficiencies and inadequacies in Arab

society. Defiance of the once dominant powers—and of Israel—thus became virtually indispensable to the program of any Arab nationalist leader desirous of proving his bona fides, and successful defiance was bound to bring commensurate prestige in the Arab world. It was not until very recently that Arab fear of foreign domination even began to encompass the Soviet Union as well as the West.

47. In asserting his militant independence, Nasser has been aided immeasurably by two trends in the policies of the great world powers. On the one hand, the Western nations which once dominated the region have become in recent years increasingly resigned to abandoning special positions and influence in areas once treated as colonial or semi-colonial states. He has been equally helped by a concurrent development in Soviet policy: the willingness of the USSR, in the post-Stalin period, to espouse the cause of nationalist movements in the Afro-Asian world as a means of weakening Western influence in the hope of enhancing Soviet prospects for control in these areas. Much more than any other Arab leader, Nasser has successfully exploited these two trends.

48. Nasser's policy toward the two great power blocs is derived from a basic belief that either side, if given free rein, would move to dominate him or destroy both his independence and that of the Arab world. What prevents this from happening, in his view, is that neither side has nor can get free rein because of the determination of the other to prevent it. With the giants thus standing each other off and (ideally) competing positively for his favor, Nasser has, in his own view, the best chance both of insuring his own freedom from their domination and being the recipient of essential material support.

49. However, although Nasser's practice of "positive neutralism" has gained for him considerable maneuverability, it has not given him a free field in the Middle East. The existence of Arab particularism, described above, is itself an obstacle. In addition, both power blocs, partly by supporting this particularism, are in a position to hinder Nasser's ex-

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pansion. So, too, is the State of Israel. Even at the height of Nasser's successes in 1958 these elements worked to inhibit any sweeping triumph on his part.

50. Despite his dependence on the Bloc, it is significant that Nasser has shown himself ready to respond vigorously when he felt that the USSR threatened his position. The Communist challenge to nationalism in Iraq in 1959 led to a period of estrangement between the UAR and the Bloc, and there has been a recent dispute occasioned by Soviet attacks on the "socialist" philosophy of the UAR and the UAR's suppression of local Communists. Nasser characteristically responded to these attacks by seeking friendlier relations with the US and by loud defiance of Soviet attempts to interfere in the UAR's internal affairs.

51. It is highly unlikely that Nasser will abandon the broad foreign policy of "positive neutralism." He will seek to avoid both total dependence on, and total alienation from, either of the great power blocs—while at the same time trying to derive maximum independent power and maneuverability through his position of leadership in the Arab world and his influence among the neutralists. Clearly, however, this strategy will work only so long as both the West and the Bloc continue willing to support Nasser's independent role.

52. It is probable that with the passage of time the inherent incompatibility between ultimate Soviet ambitions in the Middle East and the aspirations of Nasser and the Arab nationalists to preserve and strengthen their independent position will become increasingly manifest. In time, the Soviets may conclude that support for bourgeois nationalist regimes like that of the UAR should be replaced by increasingly heavy-handed pressure and subversion. Such a change would probably result in a fundamental breach in USSR-UAR

relations. The Soviets probably already feel that Nasser's heavy dependence on Bloc military and economic assistance gives them a considerable leverage over him. A decisive breach may not come for years. However, the Communist push for power in Iraq in 1959 and Khrushchev's recent, brief flurry of propaganda attacks on the UAR suggest that the Soviets may be willing to risk a breach somewhat sooner than appeared likely three years ago. A Soviet decision to make such a radical change in approach would depend on considerations outside the scope of this estimate on Nasser and Arab nationalism.

53. In this connection, the Soviet attack on the UN structure, growing out of the Congo affair, has already posed a dilemma for Nasser. He is, on the one hand, subject to strong Soviet pressures to support what amounts to a drastic weakening of the organization. At the same time, he is sensitive to the fact that an effective UN is important to the security of the UAR and other weaker states which he hopes to cultivate, and that it constitutes a major hope of making their influence felt in the world.

54. In any case, the lessons of recent Soviet behavior have not been lost on Nasser. His innate suspicions and distrust of the West will remain, but he has probably been compelled to take a somewhat more sober view of the risks and uncertainties involved in dependence on the Bloc. His response will probably be an increased willingness to take out reinsurance in the form of better relations with the West, principally the US. But such moves will stop well short of any lasting or clear alignment. Any such adjustment in Nasser's policy toward the great powers will be supplemented by continuing and earnest efforts to cultivate influence and leadership among the non-aligned states. These efforts, however, will not end his dependence on the great powers for military and economic aid and markets.

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